

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method of converting municipal solid waste into a useful compost material, the method comprising the following steps:

providing a stream of solid waste for treatment;

extracting valuable materials from the solid waste;

scanning the remaining solid waste with a Geiger counter to detect the presence or absence of radioactive materials;

removing any detected radioactive materials from the solid waste;

grinding the solid waste into particles of 1 millimeter or less;

transferring the ground solid waste into a drum;

adding manure and sludge to the drum and thereafter sealing the drum;

rotating the drum to mix the ground solid waste, manure and sludge;

sterilizing the contents of the drum by adding steam in an amount sufficient to pressurize and heat the drum to 120° for approximately 37 minuets;

permitting the drum to cool for a period of 10 to 30 minutes and thereafter depressurizing the drum by venting the remaining steam;

removing the contents of the drum.

2. The method as described in claim 1 wherein an enzymatic solution is added during one of the steps to facilitate degradation of the solid waste.

3. The method as described in claim 1 wherein nitrogen is added to assist in sterilizing the solid waste.

4. A method of converting municipal solid waste into a useful compost material, the method comprising the following steps:

providing a stream of solid waste for treatment;

grinding the solid waste into particles;

transferring the ground solid waste into a drum;

adding manure and/or sludge to the drum and thereafter sealing the drum;

rotating the drum to mix the ground solid waste, manure and/or sludge;

sterilizing the contents of the drum by adding steam;

permitting the drum to cool and thereafter depressurizing the drum by venting the remaining steam;

removing the contents of the drum.

5. The method as described in claim 4 wherein prior to grinding the solid waste it is scanned with a Geiger counter to detect the presence or absence of radioactive materials and wherein any detected radioactive materials are removed from the solid waste.

6. The method as described in claim 4 wherein prior to grinding valuable materials are removed from the solid waste.

7. The method as described in claim 4 wherein during sterilization steam is added in an amount sufficient to heat the drum to 120° for approximately 37 minuets.